UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/PRST/1999/34
30 November 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 4073rd meeting of the Security Council, held on 30 November 1999 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered, within its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, its role in the prevention of armed conflicts. The Council emphasizes the need fully to respect and implement the principles and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and norms of international law, in particular in this context those related to prevention of armed conflicts and settlement of disputes by peaceful means. It affirms its commitment to the principles of the political independence, sovereign equality and territorial integrity of all States. The Council also affirms the need for respect for human rights and the rule of law. It will give special attention to the humanitarian consequences of armed conflicts. The Council recognizes the importance of building a culture of prevention of armed conflicts and the need for a contribution from all principal organs of the United Nations in that regard.

"The Security Council stresses the importance of a coordinated international response to economic, social, cultural or humanitarian problems, which are often the root causes of armed conflicts. Recognizing the need for the development of effective long-term strategies, it emphasizes the need for all United Nations organs and agencies to pursue preventive strategies and to take action within their respective areas of competence to assist Member States to eradicate poverty, strengthen development cooperation and assistance and promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

"The Security Council recognizes that early warning, preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment, preventive disarmament and post-conflict peace-building are interdependent and complementary components of a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy. The Council emphasizes its continuing commitment to addressing the prevention of armed conflicts in all regions of the world.

"The Security Council is aware of the importance of its early consideration of situations which might deteriorate into armed conflicts. In this context it underlines the importance of the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, in accordance with Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. The Council recalls that parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, have an obligation to seek peaceful means of settlement.

"The Security Council reaffirms its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations to take action on its own initiatives in order to maintain international peace and security. The results of the Council's mission to Jakarta and Dili from 6 to 12 September 1999 demonstrate that such missions undertaken with the consent of the host country and with clear goals can be useful if dispatched in a timely and appropriate manner. The Council expresses intention to support, with appropriate follow-up action, efforts to prevent conflict by the Secretary-General through such areas as fact-finding missions, good offices and other activities requiring action by his envoys and Special Representatives.

"The Security Council emphasizes the important role of the Secretary-General in the prevention of armed conflicts. The Council expresses its readiness to consider appropriate preventive action in response to the matters brought to its attention by States or the Secretary-General and which it deems likely to threaten international peace and security. It invites the Secretary-General to present to the members of the Council periodic reports on such disputes, including, as appropriate, early warnings and proposals for preventive measures. In this regard the Council encourages the Secretary-General to improve further his capacity to identify potential threats to international peace and security and invites him to indicate any requirements to fulfil these capacities, including the development of Secretariat's expertise and resources.

"The Security Council recalls that the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force, as the first United Nations preventive deployment mission, has prevented the spillover of conflict and tensions from the region to the host country. The Council will continue to consider the establishment of such preventive missions in appropriate circumstances.

"The Security Council will also consider other preventive measures such as the establishment of demilitarized zones and preventive disarmament. While fully conscious of the responsibilities of other United Nations organs, it emphasizes the crucial importance of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means of their delivery for the maintenance of international peace and security. In particular, progress in preventing and combating the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is of vital importance to the prevention of armed conflicts. The Council will also take appropriate measures in situations of post-conflict peace-building aimed at preventing the recurrence of armed conflicts, including through adequate programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. The Council

acknowledges the increasingly important role of the civilian components of multifunctional peacekeeping operations and will look towards their playing a greater role in wider preventive efforts.

"The Security Council recalls the provisions of Article 39 of the Charter of the United Nations concerning measures to prevent armed conflicts. Such measures may include targeted sanctions, in particular arms embargoes and other enforcement measures. In imposing such measures the Council will pay special attention to their likely effectiveness in achieving clearly defined objectives, while avoiding negative humanitarian consequences as much as possible.

"The Security Council recognizes the link between the prevention of armed conflicts, the facilitation of the peaceful settlement of disputes and the promotion of security for the civilian population, in particular the protection of human life. Furthermore, the Council underlines that the existing international criminal tribunals represent useful instruments to combat impunity and can, by helping to deter crimes against humanity, contribute to the prevention of armed conflicts. In this context the Council acknowledges the historic significance of the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

"The Security Council recognizes the important role that regional organizations and arrangements are playing in the prevention of armed conflicts, including through the development of confidence- and security-building measures. The Council also emphasizes the importance of supporting and improving regional capacities for early warning. It emphasizes the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in preventive activities in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. The Council welcomes meetings between the United Nations, including the Security Council, and regional organizations, and encourages participants to continue to focus those meetings on issues related to prevention of armed conflicts.

"The Security Council will continue to review its activities and strategies for the prevention of armed conflicts. It will consider the possibility of holding further orientation debates and strengthening its cooperation with the Economic and Social Council. The Council will also consider the possibility of a meeting at the level of Foreign Ministers on the issue of prevention of armed conflicts during the Millennium Assembly.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."